

# WORDS & VISION

UCFV FACULTY & STAFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Welcome to this academic year's first edition of "Words and Vision," the revamped newsletter of the UCFV-FSA.

Before I bring you up to date as to what I have been doing and observing on the provincial front, let me first encourage you to participate in **UCFV's United Way Campaign**. Donations are tax deductible, can be handled through payroll deduction, and you can designate where and to what purpose you would like your contribution to go. I have recently taken this route myself, rather than trying to sort through the literally dozens of phone solicitors that call me on the phone in the evenings.

Second, I would like to personally extend an invitation to every member of our association to attend the annual **FSA Christmas Dinner and Dance**, held this year at the **Abbotsford Arts Centre on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**.

Good food, good live music, good dancing, good company. Always a good time, I look forward to seeing you there.

Before getting to the main item of this report, I would like to note how much I have enjoyed getting to know and working with our new Vice President Academic, Dianne Common. Her enthusiastic commitment to the spirit of UCFV and to the important role post-secondary opportunity plays in the lives of all citizens in the upper Fraser Valley region is much appreciated.

Part of my job as FSA President is to work with other post-secondary employee associations to engage the provincial government regarding post-secondary education policy and funding. This Fall, much has been happening, but not much, if anything, has been decided. **The Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services** has been touring BC in preparation for the February 2007 provincial budget. And, by the time you read this, I will have made a presentation to the **Campus 20/20** public hearings in Abbotsford on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

It is getting easier to determine what the provincial government is up to these days. It isn't easier to be optimistic, but it is easier to read their minds.

They are committed to not raising taxes. They fear that government revenues from the resource sector will decline by 2010. They fear the

demographics of BC's aging population will mean increased percentages of the provincial budget will have to be devoted to even a watered-down version of our medical system. They fear Olympic cost overruns and the wrath of angry tax payers (though the "O-word" is never mentioned explicitly). They are committed to a balanced budget. And they come up for election in 2009.

The evidence for this view comes from many sources: from chatting with civil servants from the Ministry of Advanced Education both here and in Victoria; from conversations with Robert Buchan (our relatively new VP External); from the responses of various local MLA's to various inquiries, from reading Vaughn Palmer and Michael Smyth; and even from reading the government's full-color flyer to local households which, while announcing that the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services was touring BC to "listen" to citizens from the regions, it was, nonetheless, committed in

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advance to not raising taxes and to balanced budgets through 2010. In addition to their commitments to the Winter Olympics and the Gateway Project, the government may spend some “new” money—they seemingly intend to raise the pitiful shelter allowance for welfare recipients—but don’t expect much.

I bring this up as back ground to the presentation I made before the Standing Committee when it stopped in Abbotsford on October 6th and again as part of a FPSE (our Federation of Post-Secondary Educators) delegation to that same committee in Victoria on October 18<sup>th</sup>. My presentation made a number of obvious points and went something like the following:

UCFV has grown as the population in the Fraser Valley has grown. In the 2005-06 academic year, we served 10,854 students with 8,000 enrolled in university-level programs. UCFV now offers more than 80 programs that meet regional needs from developmental and trades training to bachelor’s and master’s degrees. By 2030, based on regional population growth and increasing participation rates, we could well enroll close to 20,000 students.

Not only is the Fraser Valley one of the fastest growing regions in all of Canada, but the 18-24 year-old population in this region is growing six times faster than the provincial average. In addition, many thousands of mature students with jobs and families in the Fraser Valley need access to post-secondary education to advance their skills and qualifications and to enhance their employment opportunities.

We at UCFV have grown and served an increasing number of students of all backgrounds and ages with an increasing number of programs, diplomas, certificates and degrees; nonetheless, not all students have been well served and many students are not being served at all.

I noted that the rate of university education as measured in 2001 in the Abbotsford CMA (Census Metropolitan Area) was only 11.6% as compared to, for example, 30.3% in Ottawa-Hull. The low percentage of university graduates in the Abbotsford CMA is an historic inequality and is increasingly viewed as a barrier to economic growth in the region. I noted earlier that the growth rate of the 18-24 year old group is six times the provincial average. When low participation rates in post-secondary education are factored in, it becomes clear that in the Fraser Valley there are now and will continue to be many students who require but do not have access to post-secondary educational opportunity.

I stressed that presently, UCFV is turning away entire cohorts of students in Business, Nursing, and KPE.

For potential post-secondary students in this region, affordability is a major barrier. When the provincial government deregulated tuition fees in 2002, fees skyrocketed. Most program fees have doubled since then. Many have risen much higher than that.

The effect on students is far-reaching. Many have taken on what can only be described as punitive debts just to complete their programs. Others have been discouraged from either enrolling in or completing

their post-secondary education. And still others have tried to ‘burn the candle at both ends’ by dropping back to part-time studies while they work at various jobs to make ends meet. I see the results in my classroom where talented students fall behind because they are being squeezed between rising tuition fees and long work hours.

High tuition rates are especially problematic for particular groups of potential students. Students working full time, supporting families and trying to obtain their objectives a course or two at a time, find that the combination of tuition and the increasing cost of course materials presses family budgets beyond the breaking point. This has a special impact on Fraser Valley citizens who need ESL courses and College and Career Preparation courses to prepare them for further post-secondary training.

At the institution level, there has been an ongoing funding crunch because operating grants from the provincial government have not kept pace with either growing demands or basic needs. Just to put that funding crunch into some sort of perspective, consider just some of the basic math that the post-secondary system has faced over the last five years. Since 2001 the annual budget for the Ministry of Advanced Education has increased by 9.6%. However, core inflation as measured by the Ministry of Finance over that same period has increased by 12.9%. We are falling behind, and it’s our students and ultimately our economy that will pay the price.

I also sought to address the province’s looming skills shortage. It is clear that the government’s policy and funding choices over the last five years are moving in the wrong direction if we hope to successfully address this shortage in the years ahead. Higher tuition fees and chronic under-funding are making it more difficult for students to get the skills the economy needs, and this is happening at a time when the demand for those skills is increasing. There’s a serious disconnect between those two forces, one that the February 2007 budget needs to tackle head-on.

The response of the Standing Committee (composed of MLA’s from both parties) at my presentation in Abbotsford was somewhere between bored and argumentative. But I can’t say that the Committee seemed to treat Abbotsford’s Mayor Ferguson and Councilman Beck, or the lobbyists from the mining industry who spoke before me, any better. The reception of the entire FPSE President’s Council delegation in Victoria was more cordial and engaging, perhaps because of the size of our delegation, and perhaps because we had an hour with them, not just the ten minutes I was afforded in Abbotsford.

But when a government is committed in advance to balancing budgets and not raising taxes, while at the same time it faces declining revenue projections set against increasing cost projections for projects to which it is already more or less committed, there is not much room for them to move regardless of their take on our arguments and concerns.

*-Scott Fast*



## FROM THE EDITOR

It has been an interesting few months for me as I return to the position of FSA Communications Chair.

At our Retreat, the Executive made a commitment to improve communications, but it has not always been a smooth road. Although we began preparing it in mid-October, only now are you receiving the first *Words and Vision* of the academic year. (Once upon a time, *Words & Vision* appeared monthly during Fall and Winter terms!)

We are still trying to remember, or to re-invent, how FSA communications should work. For example, in a clumsy effort to register the presence of all table officers for the *FSA-All Fall Hello*, I attributed remarks to an officer without her permission. Now, we are discussing the editorial role of the Communications Chair and whether an Executive member should be able to veto what other Executive members say in print about the member's area.

We are also not clear about whether FSA Executive meeting Minutes (not including *in camera* sessions) should be available to all members. (Once upon a time, we sent our Minutes to the UCFV Board!)

My working assumption is that communications at UCFV should be as open as possible, which the FSA used to model. For example, once upon a time, an FSA representative to CAC (College Advisory Council, the precursor to University College Council) sent reports on each meeting to all FSA members. And our first departmental UCC representative, who represented several small departments, visited our department meetings to report to us. (UCC agenda and minutes are available at [www.ucfv.bc.ca/ucc/UCC\\_Committee/UCC\\_Approved\\_Meeting\\_Minutes.htm](http://www.ucfv.bc.ca/ucc/UCC_Committee/UCC_Approved_Meeting_Minutes.htm).)

Of course, there will be legitimate disagreement about the appropriate role for FSA communications. I received some favourable feedback about *FSA-All* for sending out news from other unions, and some unfavourable comment about items that criticized the BC Liberal government.

It seems appropriate to circulate items from our affiliates that are relevant to education or to FSA members, whether or not we all agree with the article's stance. We are affiliated with the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE), and through FPSE with the BC Federation of Labour and hence with the Canadian Labour Congress. So, we should see what they are doing on our behalf and on behalf of education in Canada. In turn, we can affect their policy.

It also seems appropriate to circulate relevant news items that members may have missed, such as the link in *FSA-All* to a newspaper article predicting wage increases over the next few years twice the size of our own wage increases.

I hope you find this issue of *Words & Vision* shows some progress towards renewed openness. And I hope you can use the information to make your views known on the many issues currently being debated and negotiated at UCFV.

For example, in this issue, the Contract Chair reports on negotiations about faculty banking overload sections (including release-time). Some members think there should be as few restrictions as possible on individual faculty maximising their economic benefits, e.g., some faculty have now banked close to 20 sections. But does that work for the good of the institution: are students and colleagues well-served by a faculty member who banks several overload sections per year? If the FSA represents only the individual interests of our members, then we cede to management definition of what is good for UCFV as an institution.

On another front, we continue to work on the FSA's new logo and website design (including discussion forums and polling software). The website is in the second of three design stages, and the logo, approved by Executive, is being given final tweaks.

Finally, please help us facilitate openness and discussion at UCFV and within the FSA. Send us information and opinion you would like to see in *FSA-All* or in the next *Words and Vision*. What do you think about the many items the FSA is negotiating with management? Do you know what issues are currently before UCC and how they might affect you? Discuss these issues in your departments and functional areas, and let your representatives and other FSA members know what you think!

And please let me know how well we are communicating.

-Paul Herman

## Strike Up The Band! 50 Years of Making Trouble For All The Right Reasons

Thursday, November 30, 2006 Time: 8  
pm

The Orpheum Theatre

Admission: \$35

Tickets: 604.231.7535 or [www.ticketstonight.ca](http://www.ticketstonight.ca)

Information: [www.thefestival.bc.ca/bcfedgala.html](http://www.thefestival.bc.ca/bcfedgala.html)

*Strike Up The Band!*, produced for the Federation by the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, will feature blues icon Jim Byrnes, African-American roots music celebrity Linda Tillery with Vancouver's Universal Gospel Choir, and Po'Girls member Allison Russell. Steve Dawson will lead the Union All Star Band, assembled for the occasion, and a performance by Tons of Fun University will add a comedic note to the evening's entertainment. Joe Keithley will emcee the event.



## STAFF CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR

Well, this Fall term has been off to a quick and busy start. Through all the hustle and bustle, I have had the opportunity to reconnect and work with many familiar faces as a result of my involvement with the FSA. Although I have been at UCFV for almost 14 years, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with many new employees. I enjoy that this position with the FSA office affords me the opportunity to meet and interact with so many different people that I may not have had the opportunity to meet otherwise.

I thought I would take the opportunity to provide a summary of some of the contract administration issues that I have been involved in over the past couple of months. The following is a list that outlines some of what I have been working on in my role as Staff Contract Administrator:

**SAC's** – This term I have been involved in quite a few Selection Advisory Committees (SAC's) as an observer. I do not sit on all staff SAC's as an observer, but many times I am asked by an internal candidate to sit in on the process. This quite often is the case when a qualified internal applicant has been selected for an interview or if there are multiple internal candidates that have been short-listed.

**Terminations** – There have been three terminations since June. When representing members that have been terminated by the employer, it is important to keep in mind that it is a very difficult time for all parties involved. I appreciate the discretion and the professional environment that is provided when dealing with these types of situations. I believe that the climate with which we work to resolve these situations is very important as the nature of the discussions can be very sensitive.

1. A Type A employee was terminated during his trial period according to article 12.1(d)(iii) of the collective agreement. This article states that at the end of the trial period, the employee shall be reevaluated and, as a result of the reevaluation, shall be returned to a continuing appointment without term unless there is cause for termination as per article 14 (termination and discipline). In this case, the employee received an unfavorable evaluation during his trial period and was terminated as a result.

Upon notice of the termination, a grievance was initiated on behalf of the employee. Over the duration of many weeks a resolution to the grievance was reached that was to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

2. A Type A employee was terminated during his initial probationary period according to article 12.1(b) of the collective agreement. This article states that all new appointees to Type A staff positions will serve an initial probationary period of 1824 hours in one position in one department. During the

probationary period, a probationary employee may be transferred, laid off, or dismissed for any stated reason. In this case, the employee received an unfavorable evaluation during his initial probationary period.

Before notice of the termination was presented to the employee, the employee opted to resign from his position. The employee did not want to pursue a grievance; however, a resolution was reached to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

3. A Type C employee was terminated during her probationary period according to article 12.2(b)(ii) of the collective agreement. This article states that during the initial probationary period, a probationary employee may be transferred, laid off, dismissed or not reappointed for any stated reason. In this particular case the employee was terminated because of an unfavorable evaluation.

The notice of termination was presented to the employee 6 weeks before the end of her contract. As a result, the employee was paid for the remainder of her contract but her services were no longer required. A grievance was not initiated as the contract details were upheld.

**Discipline** – I have represented two employees over the past few months that have received disciplinary action. Quite commonly the means of discipline that are used are a written censure or letter of reprimand or an adverse evaluation report.

1. In the first case, the employee received a letter of reprimand in his personnel file as a result of failing to carry out the required duties of his position.

In this case, the employer had held a few meetings with the employee where it was clearly stated what the expectations of the employee were with respect to his job duties. It was also stated that failure to carry out the required duties would result in further action to be taken by the employer. As the employee continued to fail to carry out the required duties of his position, a written reprimand was issued to the employee and placed in his personnel file for a specified period of time.

2. In the second case, the employee also received a letter of reprimand in her personnel file as a result of inappropriate and unsafe behavior in the workplace.

In this case, the employer had held several departmental meetings with the employees outlining what behavior was considered acceptable in the workplace. Subsequently, an employee in the department failed to follow what had been established as safe and appropriate behavior in the workplace.

*continued on page 5...*



## FACULTY CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR

As this is my first submission to *Words and Visions* as your Faculty Contract Administrator, it is difficult to know what to report on. If there are topics you'd like to learn more about, or aspects of the Collective Agreement you'd like clarified, please let me know, and I'll try to address these in future submissions to this publication or to *FSA-All*. This position carries with it a 57% release from teaching, and has been a steep learning curve for me since taking over in June, as I try to navigate with the employer the intricacies of the Collective Agreement on your behalf.

I hope that I have provided those of you who have sought out my services with some insight and, in some cases, a resolution to the concerns you have brought to my attention. For those of you who still think of this position as that of "Grievance Chair", I would remind you that the job title was changed a few years ago to reflect the fact that, here at UCFV, the overwhelming majority of disputes raised under the Collective Agreement are resolved informally and before the formal stage of launching a grievance. This reflects the collegial and respectful working relationship that we have with the employer, which I believe is a strength resulting from our ability to work collaboratively with management in the fulfillment of our institution's educational purpose.

In anticipation of my new role, I have recently enrolled in the Associate Certificate in Workplace Conflict program at the Justice Institute of British Columbia. I found the first course I completed very useful and hands-on in its approach, and I would encourage any faculty or staff member at UCFV who finds themselves in a situation of conflict at work to consider attending one of the JI's courses. They are an excellent opportunity for professional development and may even provide you with some concrete suggestions to help you in your day-to-day work.

I have really enjoyed getting to know Scott and Heidi as well as working with the rest of the FSA Executive. I have also found working with Diane Griffiths in Employee Services and the rest of the management team to be an open, frank, and constructive endeavour. I'd like to thank them all for their patience as I continue to learn the job.

Where I have learned the most, however, is in my interactions with faculty from across the institution, learning about their unique roles and the struggles they face in their daily work. Although we have a Collective Agreement that applies equally to all of us, each of our jobs is unique, and it is not always clear to me that the rules are applied consistently to all members. This is a reality that can lead to a lot of interpersonal conflict and resentment, whereby FSA members believe that they are experiencing different or unequal treatment in comparison to their colleagues. It is also true that many workplace disputes do not give rise to a Collective Agreement issue. In these cases, it is incumbent upon all of us to make concerted efforts to

work with others in respectful ways and to keep the lines of communication open.

At UCFV we have a structure whereby Department Heads and many Directors are also FSA members, whose jobs require that they act on behalf of the employer in the fulfillment of their duties. I cannot stress how important it is to be cognizant of the dual relationship that exists in these cases—it is vital that this important work of managing departments be done with the knowledge that the rules of the Collective Agreement are not the FSA's rules alone, but rather the collective rules agreed to by all those who work at UCFV.

And while much of the work that I have been engaged in is confidential in nature, I am happy to report on a couple of recent successes: we were able to apply the Collective Agreement to prevent the move from one campus to another of a faculty member who would have been negatively affected; and we have reached an agreement in principle to resolve a situation whereby faculty members in one academic area were teaching beyond the requirements of the Collective Agreement.

I recently attended my first meeting of my provincial counterparts in late September, and am pleased to report that UCFV does seem to enjoy an overall labour climate that is envied by other post-secondary institutions. As I write this, however, I recognize that not everyone experiences their careers here at UCFV with the same level of satisfaction that should be reflected by a well-intentioned employer and a respectful working environment. That is precisely why I ran for this office last spring and why I hope that you will feel free to come to me with your concerns, confident in the knowledge that I will do my best to represent you confidentially and with fairness of outcome in mind.

-Curtis Magnuson

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*continued from page 4*

As a result, she received a written letter of reprimand outlining the employer's concerns that has been placed in her personnel file for a specified period of time.

If you have any questions or would like to stop by the FSA office please feel free to do so. I can be reached at local 4593 or you can find me in B377. I am in the Abbotsford FSA office Monday through Friday, and upon request I am readily available to meet with members on another campus.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
-Heidi Tvete



## CONTRACT CHAIR

With the falling of the leaves, I can't help but reflect on the changes afoot in administration at UCFV. Bargaining has tended to be amicable and fairly predictable until recently. While it is still amicable, I can't say that it is predictable. Now, as we bargain, I can't help but wonder who will be on the other side of the table in 6 months. With the recent retirement of Wayne Welsh and Barry Bompas, and the even more recent announcement by Jackie Snodgrass of her leaving for her new V.P. position at Capilano, I can only feel that I have managed to drive off every senior administrator (except for one) that has sat across the table from us in the past 5 years. As bargaining often continues where we left off last round, I am thankful that we are not entering a new bargaining round this year with all of the other changes that have occurred and that are rumored to be on the horizon. I have heard rumors of new Schools, new Deans, new Directors, fewer Deans, fewer Directors, shifting Deaneries, shrunken Deaneries, growing Deaneries, focused growth, targeted growth, new planned areas of growth...I guess in a nutshell, if you can believe the rumors, we can anticipate that there will be change in our near future. And no, I didn't start any of these rumors myself this time!

Recent work on some of the outstanding Letter's of Understanding (LOU) has brought us close to signing agreements on the Management Evaluations and Department Head workload/Summer semester issues. LOU's slated for discussion before Christmas include the Writing Center Employee classification review, and Online Learning & Intellectual property rights. The LOU regarding early retirement will likely be dealt with after Christmas.

The LOU on Management Evaluations has moved along fairly smoothly in the last few months. The working group that is trying to find language and a management evaluation form for this issue are meeting regularly at this time, with what appears to be common ground on the horizon. After the group puts a proposal together, it will move to Labor and Management (LAM) for review and consideration for adoption. We are hopeful that this will move along quickly, as Eric Davis has kindly volunteered to be the first to go through the process. On behalf of the FSA, thanks to Eric. We are hoping to move this along quickly enough to evaluate Eric at the end of his first year as Dean, not at the end of his 5 year term! With the recent changes in upper management, we are looking forward to ensuring this tool is in place shortly to provide a form of input for members, allowing a tool for members to provide feedback for these new administrators as they struggle to learn the ropes in their first year at the helm.

The Department Head/Summer workload issues LOU has been as time-consuming as any I have dealt with so far. With such a large number of issues and of members affected and such a wide variety of jobs included in the review, it seems difficult to address all of the issues in a manner that will recognize the efforts of all. The summary document from the Management committee was circulated to the department heads and

department assistants in June 2006. After further consideration by the Agreements committee, it was concluded that the document would be accepted with the exception that the proposed changes for 2007/2008 be interchanged with the recommendations for 2008/2009. Departments that had been flagged for increased departmental assistants for 2007/2008 will be allowed to lobby their Dean for an increase in departmental assistants, as they always have been.

The LOU for early retirement or phased retirement will begin after Christmas. Recent information from several other institutions has indicated that mandatory retirement has been removed for faculty at several other local post-secondary institutions. There has been no indication that mandatory retirement has been removed for the staff component as well. There are issues regarding the pension plans and other considerations that will require full review and consideration prior to any changes in our policy. If you have questions regarding a mandatory early retirement which is imminent, please contact Norm Taylor as he will be able to direct you to a short-term answer to your questions.

A request from management after bargaining had concluded left me a little surprised. During bargaining, there had been a discussion regarding the potential need for guidelines regarding the amount of overloads that could be banked or wording regarding the use of banked overloads. Management insisted at that time that there would be no need for such wording, as there were not very many members with a significant number of banked overloads. With that settled, there was no further mention of the matter, until Barry Bompas was on the golf course full time. Shortly thereafter, there was a request from management to agree to such an item. The issue has been forwarded to the Agreements Committee, which consists of myself, Kevin Busswood and Diane Griffiths.

The wording that has been proposed by Management follows:

*Language **Proposed** by Management for Drawing Banked Sections:*

*Faculty who wish to reduce their workload by up to two sections may do so without notice.*

*Faculty who wish to use banked sections to take a two semester sabbatical leave, or to take a one semester leave at another time, must normally provide one year's notice to the department.*

*In all cases, the department has the opportunity to review the leave plan to ensure the instructional and staffing needs of the department will be met.*

*Appeals of departmental decisions will be to the Labour and Management Committee.*



The proposal for management is to make this new language apply to any sections accrued after this is in place. This is at the proposal stage and no agreement has been made. Please forward any feedback to myself or Kevin Busswood.

In short, there appears to be much progress on these outstanding Letters of Agreement and other contract issues. Please feel free to contact me for further information if you wish more details about any of these items. If I can't help, you I will direct you to who can.

I have had several members ask why the Contract report in the UCFV FSA – Fall Hello referred to toilet paper and external Union issues, but not to any real bargaining items at UCFV. My apologies, as I in fact did not write that item for the release. While I try to make every effort to keep the membership informed, we were starting negotiations on 4 Letters of Agreement at that time and I did not have any information that could be released to the general membership. I preferred to remain silent and provide an update shortly once the matters could be publicized. In the absence of a report, the Editor felt obliged to write something to publish under the heading Contract Issues. Clearly I will submit a report for every publication from the FSA from here on in, even if it only says "I'm still here".

-Shelley Drysdale

## STAFF VICE PRESIDENT

I will be visiting the various UCFV campuses twice a month on Thursdays and would like to meet with anyone having questions for the FSA. If I can answer any of your concerns, I will be happy to do so.

Recently, I was on the Chilliwack campus. I bet that was a surprise to some of you! Short of interrupting people at work, which was not my intention, I found myself wandering the campus admiring the grounds all on my own. Very pleasant, but not what I had hoped for.

If an arranged meeting would be more in keeping with work schedules, please contact me at either my e-mail address or voice mail, and I will get back to you as quickly as possible.

I had mentioned in *FSA-All* that I will be away during the week of November 27<sup>th</sup> to December 1<sup>st</sup> to attend the BC Federation of Labour conference. With the movement to raise the minimum wage and conflict over importing skilled labor, etc., it should be interesting.

I would also like to remind everyone that the Christmas Dinner and Dance is December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Abby Arts Centre, and tickets will be going on sale early in November. It will be a great time!

-Connie Cyrull



## Post Secondary Educators Branch

### A New Organization for College Retirees

Have you just retired or are in the retirement planning process? Why not keep in touch with your working friends and colleagues by joining the Post-Secondary Educators' Branch of the BCRTA, (BC Retired Teachers Association)?

The purpose of our branch is to provide opportunities to meet and discuss matters of common interest to college retirees, to communicate to members on the activities of the association, promote the interest and to guard the welfare of the members, and discuss issues such as College Pension Plan benefits. As a Branch of the RTA, we have voice and vote, through our delegates, at the BCRTA annual general meeting, as well as input to the FPSE Pension Advisory Committee.

We also have benefits for you! Membership in our Branch provides the following privileges:

- The opportunity to engage in social activities such as luncheons, day trips, speaker presentations, and sports events – all of which permit continuing contact with colleagues from your working days as an educator;
- Input into pension concerns through our representatives on the FPSE College Pension Plan Advisory Committee;
- Input into pension decisions through the College Pension Plan Trustees as they deal with the challenges of maintaining pension indexing and health benefits. One of the College Pension Plan Trustees is nominated by FPSE and the BCGEU to represent college retirees;
- An opportunity to participate in group insurance plans such as; out of Province Health & Travel coverage, home, life and long term care insurance;
- The means by which to keep current on matters pertaining to the interests of retired educators through the excellent BCRTA publication, *Postscript*, which you will receive four times a year, and through your branch newsletter;
- Representation through the BCRTA on the executive of CART, the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers; (This association has influence on matters concerning seniors as citizens of Canada.)
- Affiliation with COSCO (the Council of Senior Citizens Organization), which represents about 60,000 BC seniors advocating on your behalf.

We have a website where you will find an application form, [www.fpse.ca/formembers/pensions](http://www.fpse.ca/formembers/pensions) or you may email: [pat@bcrt.com](mailto:pat@bcrt.com) or [Kristi@bcrt.com](mailto:Kristi@bcrt.com) for further information.



## FACULTY VICE PRESIDENT

I have many issues to discuss, so let me get right to it. To begin with, please refer to the document in the Appendix to this report. This came to me via the Pension Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Federation of Post Secondary Educators (FPSE). Essentially, the trustees of the College Pension Plan (the pension plan for Faculty) are considering a proposal to allow members to move their existing RRSP funds into the same funds that make up our pension plan. As you can see, there are several downsides. The main ones are:

- a. Only existing RRSP funds can be switched over (not new contributions requiring a tax receipt).
- b. They can be switched over only once a year, on July 1.
- c. Once in, they are locked in. And they have to come out when the member retires, resigns, or is laid off.
- d. There would be transaction fees, but I was assured at the semi-annual meeting on Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> that these would be low – perhaps \$40 per transaction.
- e. Any reporting of performance will be done on the website (and the performance will be identical to that of the overall pension plan.)
- f. As for worrying about reducing “diversity” in your investments – don’t. bcIMC has many pools of money over many asset classes (equities, real estate, bonds, domestic & foreign). And if they get into trouble, then that will mean almost every mutual fund is in trouble.

So why do it? Well, the benchmarks are listed below. And the administrative cost, which is the Management Expense Ratio (MER), averages out to be roughly 0.22% per year. For the passive investor (like me), this is much lower than most of the other mutual funds. With all this in mind, are there members who would be interested in such a plan? If so, please contact me soon so that I can send the feedback along to Dominique Roelants, who is one of the trustees of the plan. If there is enough interest, a meeting may be scheduled at UCFV to provide more information.

The next issue I would like to update the members about is mandatory retirement. The more I learn about it, the more complicated it appears. I asked for feedback from members last time, and members seem to be split 50-50 on its elimination. From the PAC meeting, I learned that FPSE has no position, either for or against. This is not true for CUPE (which is a Staff-type union) or the CLC or the BCFed, which are in favour of keeping mandatory retirement. CUFA (which is a university Faculty union) on the other hand, wants to eliminate it. The legal issues are not clear either. It looks to me that it is possible for most employers to enforce mandatory retirement under

the current Human Rights legislation, or under section one of the Charter if they can show it to be “reasonable” (such an overworked word). In any case, Scott knows much more about the legal implications of recent court decisions than I do!

I have been checking around the system, and found out that UNBC has eliminated mandatory retirement for faculty. After hearing reports that SFU and BCIT have removed it for all employees, I had a look at their respective agreements. At BCIT, agreements are in place for both support staff and instructors, and mandatory retirement has indeed been removed. These agreements include clauses that remove some employee rights and benefits for those working beyond age 65, like Long-Term Disability (LTD). Essentially, if you become disabled, you retire immediately. At SFU, after consulting with their HR office, there have apparently been two sets of discussions about removing mandatory retirement for faculty, but nothing has been settled.

Discussions are ongoing with UCFV management on resolving our outstanding Letter of Agreement on this topic, but I don’t think it will be done quickly. Since UCFV is still growing and simultaneously having recruitment problems, it seems unlikely that any forced retirements on the faculty side will happen in the near future. Especially considering the situations at the previously-mentioned post-secondary institutions and the current legal climate! At the moment, for both UCFV faculty and staff who do not wish to retire, a letter of application should be written to the appropriate VP (VP Academic for faculty, VP Admin for staff), who will then make the decision. Perhaps it is not the best process, but it’s the one we have right now. My last comment is that I have heard (totally unsubstantiated!) rumours about a possible announcement at the provincial government level (sometime around Christmas?) removing mandatory retirement across the province, in both the public and private sector.

The last major item I have is my report on the October meeting of the Pension Advisory Committee. It usually has some interesting news, and this one was no exception. As I have reported before, the inflation protection we have in the College (faculty) Pension Plan will likely be in trouble in 10 – 15 years, and I am happy to say that fixing it is a major objective for FPSE in this bargaining round. (Remember that we settled our contract a year early, so that they have not finished – or even started – bargaining yet.) There was much optimism that some of the salary increases above the 2% floor will be used for this purpose. The one problem is that our bargaining partners, the BCGEU, are not worried about the inflation situation – for most of their employees, the Inflation Adjustment Account in their plan (Public Service) isn’t in trouble for probably 40 – 50 years. (The Municipal (staff) Plan is also expected to be OK for at least 40 years.)



What may not be fixed are the health and welfare benefits to retirees. Previously, medical, dental and other benefits were fully covered by the plan. This was changed by the trustees of the plan, and now retirees have to pay part of their MSP premiums, but still have a fully-subsidised premium for non-MSP health services (vision, hearing, some prescription costs, ambulance services, acute home care, private rooms, and also including services like naturopathy, podiatry, physiotherapy, dental services and so on). However, these benefits are “pay-as-you-go”, and are paid out of the employers’ contribution to the Inflation Adjustment Account. As more people retire, this will not cover projected expenses. To fix the problem, the trustees are considering two solutions:

1. The College plan will pay for as much of the necessary insurance premium as possible, and the retiree will pay the remainder. (The full premium was estimated at \$82 per month – as a plausible example, the Plan would pay \$60 of that, and the retiree the rest, depending on years of service.)
2. Spouses would lose their coverage. This option is being considered because this is what one of the other provincial pension plans (BC Teachers) has done. (The BC Teachers has also discontinued the subsidy for their retirees’ dental plan.)

The Municipal (staff) Pension Plan has solved this problem by charging a monthly premium for these benefits (in addition to the MSP premiums), and has recently capped the maximum payout per person for dental benefits at \$2000 per year. Other pension plans do not subsidise dental plans (e.g. Public Service).

Lastly, the next retirement seminar from the College (faculty) Pension plan is tentatively scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. Generally, every year the presentation improves – this year, they will try to include some local issues at the end of the regular session.

*-Norm Taylor*

## APPENDIX

The College Pension Board of Trustees is considering amending the College Pension Plan to create a voluntary money purchase option that will allow members the opportunity to transfer personal RRSP funds to this new account in the Plan.

The main components of this new option are as follows:

- The member can only transfer RRSP funds.
- The transfer can occur only at July 1 each year.
- The funds transferred will earn the annual market rate of return of the College Pension Plan less an administrative cost.
- The funds will be locked-in until the member either terminates employment or retires.
- On termination or retirement the funds can be transferred to a vehicle such as an RRSP, retirement income fund, or an insurance company to purchase an annuity.
- A transaction fee will be charged for both transfers in and transfers out.

This option will provide the member with an opportunity to invest in the same diversified basket of investments that are currently made on behalf of the College Pension Plan by the investment manager the British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (bcIMC). The past annual market rates of returns earned by the College Pension Plan are as follows:

Year	Annual Rate	Benchmark*
2005	14.6%	12.7%
2004	10.1%	11.8%
2003	6.9%	7.2%
2002	-2.4%	-2.6%
2001	-8.4%	-11.2%

**\* Benchmarks are objective standards approved by the board to evaluate actual investment returns. (In this case, the TSE 300 index.)**

You can use these returns to compare against alternative investment options that you are personally aware of. As always, you should remember that past performance is no guarantee of future performance.

The administrative cost and transaction fees for transfers in and out have not, as yet, been determined. We do know that they must be reasonable in order for this option to be viable to members.

As part of the trustees’ further consideration of this issue, we would like feedback on how many plan members might utilize this new investment option. Would you please discuss this with your local and be prepared to discuss this matter at the PAC meeting later this month.



## AGREEMENTS CHAIR

The Agreements Committee consists of the Agreements Chair of the FSA Executive, Kevin Busswood, and the Associate, Vice-President of Employee Services, Diane Griffiths. The Committee, aided by such other members of the Executive or Administration as are necessary, is tasked with exploring questions of interpretation that arise in the day to day administration of the collective agreement. Often, our role is to try to determine what was 'intended' by the parties within the often arcane language of the Agreement. We are also occasionally handed tasks from Labour and Management that do not fall within the purview of any other committee.

This year, at the request of LAM, we have made recommendations pursuant to the report regarding the workload of department heads. We have also helped finalize the policy regarding payment of mileage. We are presently discussing faculty banking of overload sections and will no doubt have a number of additional tasks given us as the year progresses.

Our usual practice is to make recommendations back to the parties to the Collective Agreement through the FSA Executive and LAM. So, Agreement Committee recommendations are not made publicly available except through the FSA or UCFV management.

As a general rule I refuse to meet or to discuss any issue unless refreshments are provided.

*-Kevin Busswood*

## NON-REGULAR EMPLOYEES REP

### Professional Development for Sessional Faculty

Many Sessional employees don't realize that full time Sessionals can access up to \$1,500.00 per fiscal year for professional development. Employees less than 100% are prorated (e.g., If a Sessional teaches half-time they can access up to \$750.00). If you know a Sessional, make sure to let them know about their benefits at UCFV!

For more information on the Professional Development Fund or to pick up an application form, please contact Vera Carswell (local 4014) in Employee Services.

*-Paul Dance*

## STATUS OF WOMEN REP

### Status of Women Committee Meeting

I attended my first FPSE Status of Women Committee meeting on October 20 & 21, 2006 in Vancouver, that included the following discussion items:

Campus 20/20: It was suggested that everyone look at the website and be aware of what this campaign is all about. [www.campus2020.bc.ca](http://www.campus2020.bc.ca)

Childcare: It was recommended that we incorporate CLC and BCFed childcare campaigns into our locals. Childcare is not only a women's issue: this information should be sent to everyone, not just to the Status of Women committee members.

Woman's Issues Manual: A manual has been compiled for each local, and the Status of Women Committee will maintain it and keep it current. Anyone wanting access to this manual can contact me in B249 Local 4028.

Better Futures/Better Funding: FPSE staff encouraged us to email the Premier by following the link on the FPSE website [www.fpse.ca](http://www.fpse.ca) and voice our concerns about accessibility to post-secondary education.

Bargaining: We discussed secondary pay scales for sessionals. And many questions about our institutions came forward. Do we have a hiring process if there are sessionals that could be regularized? Do we have a regularization process? The SWC members will bring this information to the February meeting for review.

UCFV Policy: Before February's meeting, each local will review their institution's Harassment and Discrimination Policy and bring forward any items that may need revisions.

Non-Regular Committee: If possible, we should work collectively with the Non-Regular Representatives to publicize Fair Employment week Oct. 30 – Nov. 3, 2006. Unfortunately I have not had time since the SWC meeting to promote this. For more information, go to the CAUT website [www.caut.ca/en/issues/cas/few.asp](http://www.caut.ca/en/issues/cas/few.asp)

UCFV Employee Gender Distribution: We agreed that each institution will request information regarding their employee gender distribution. I have contacted Dale Box, Director of UCFV Institutional Research & Planning, and this data will be provided.

### UCFV Community Women's Centre

November 28 10am-2pm: The Community Women's Centre will be having its annual bake-sale fundraiser in the Great Hall (B Building main entrance next to A & R). If this location is not approved, it will take place near the Road Runner Café (east end of A building).

December 6: The CWC at UCFV, the Fraser Valley Women's Resource Centre, and the Student Life Department will have a candlelight vigil planned for Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the lives of the 14 women murdered at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal.

*-Lori Wirth*



Followers of FSA business will recognize October as the month of two financial reports for the FSA. Our year-end review (for the last fiscal year) has been completed, and I am pleased to present the findings of the financial review performed by the accounting firm of Meyers, Norris, Penny. Second, the end of September marks the midpoint in our current fiscal year, and I am also pleased to present that report prepared by Flo Kehler.

### **Year-end review (2005-2006)**

Our year-end review is conducted annually by an independent accounting firm appointed each year by motion at the AGM. Since our AGM is held in early May, there is insufficient time for a year-end review to be performed in time for that meeting. Thus the report is published for you in our earliest newsletter. (The Executive has already reviewed this report.) As a formality, at our next AGM, you will be asked to pass a motion to *receive* this report.

Our interest in having a financial review performed is to ensure that our financial reporting is complete and transparent and our recordkeeping is in complete conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. I am pleased to report that our records are in order and our budget and expenditure reports correspond closely with those of the accounting firm. The Finance and Administration Committee of the FSA has reviewed the accountant's report, and no changes are recommended in our bookkeeping practices. We have enjoyed a good working relationship with the accountant responsible for the FSA file for the past several years at Meyers Norris Penny, and we wish her well as she sets out now in her own practice.

The findings of that review are copied in their entirety for your information, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions.

### **Semi-Annual Budget Update**

Attached is a copy of our Semi-Annual Budget update report, which has been reviewed at a recent Finance Administration Committee meeting. The purpose of this report is to identify areas where our budget turns out at odds with our actual spending. Our FSA revenues and expenditures have been compiled now for the first six months of our fiscal year, ending September 30.

The broad conclusion that can be taken from this report is that our income and expenditures are generally on track with our expectations. Of course, time elapsed and money spent are never congruent, so we do not see 50% spent in all categories as of September 30. Some of our spending is in lumps in the first half of the year and some in the second half. This you can see with our annual retreat and AGM expenditures. We overspent our budget on the AGM, and under spent on our annual retreat. At the halfway point, many of our budgeted expenditures remain yet to be made,

such as donations and membership recognition. In the line items where we have a monthly flow, we are on track.

So what explains our spending deviance on the AGM and annual retreat? The answer is in our forecast of participation. Our AGM, Cinco de Mayo event was more successful than ever imagined and drew members out from all over. We will certainly adjust our budget accordingly next year if we do a repeat.

The Finance Administration Committee met recently and recommended our annual Christmas season giving allocations in accordance with the FSA giving policy, this year in the amount of \$500 per Category 1 recipient. Recipients include the five food banks in the college region, Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Mission, Hope and Agassiz, and the UCFV Student Society Angel Tree project.

*-Ian McAskill*

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### **CONSIDER GIVING THROUGH THE UNITED WAY**

The UCFV-FSA supports the United Way Campaign for 2006 and encourages FSA members to participate. UCFV staff and faculty have been supporting the United Way Campaign for 23 consecutive years.

United Way of the Fraser Valley supports 42 agencies throughout an area stretching from Aldergrove to Boston Bar, serving a population of a quarter of a million people. A challenge for the United Way of the Fraser Valley is to increase support to these agencies. Throughout Canada, the average per capita donation to the United Way campaign is \$13.64 per; in BC the figure is almost \$11 per capita. Here in the Fraser Valley it is a low \$2.33. So, there is a challenge for the Fraser Valley.

We have had a proud history of meeting challenges as an institution and this year brings some new ones. We have close to 1,000 employees. Last year, 13.4 % of our employees contributed to the United Way campaign. Our challenge is to increase our support for this most worthwhile appeal.

Whether you live as well as work here, or commute from elsewhere to work at UCFV, your support can be made here and go towards the United Way agency of your choice. There are many ways to designate your gift, not only to one of the United Way member agencies, but to any registered charity in Canada including the UCFV Foundation. And it is so easy to do, either as single donation or regular payroll deduction. **Pledge forms can be obtained from Tara Rozenek in Employee Relations, who can also answer any questions you may have.**



**FSA Semi-Annual Budget Estimates**  
**For the Six-Months Ending**  
**September 30th, 2006**

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>2006-2007 Actual</b>	<b>2006-2007 Approved Budget</b>	<b>Percentage of Budget</b>
Revenue-Dues	\$268,471	\$551,600	48.7%
Interest Earned	<u>5,457</u>	<u>6,000</u>	90.9%
<b>Actual Revenue</b>	<b><u>\$273,928</u></b>		
<b>Budgeted Revenue</b>		<b><u>\$557,600</u></b>	
<b>Percentage of Revenue Earned</b>			<b><u>49.1%</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
AGM	\$3,649	\$2,500	145.9%
Committee Expenses	-	1,000	0.0%
Communications/website	1,981	17,000	11.7%
Delegate Fees & Seminars	732	3,000	24.4%
Donations	-	5,500	0.0%
Executive Releases	71,350	165,500	43.1%
FPSE Fees	125,646	256,800	48.9%
Joint UCFV/FSA Funded	-	4,000	0.0%
Legal/Audit Fees	5,476	7,000	78.2%
Membership Recognition	676	5,000	13.5%
Misc. office supplies, ISP, phone, fax	3,222	8,000	40.3%
Office Equipment & Repair	614	8,000	7.7%
Office Staff	38,751	83,900	46.2%
Retreats	6,306	10,000	63.1%
Social	1,543	5,000	30.9%
Travel Expenses	<u>479</u>	<u>5,000</u>	9.6%
<b>Actual Expenditures</b>	<b><u>\$260,422</u></b>		
<b>Budgeted Expenditures</b>		<b><u>\$587,200</u></b>	
<b>Percentage of Expenditures Spent</b>			<b><u>44.3%</u></b>



**U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association**  
**Financial Statements**  
March 31, 2006

*(Unaudited)*

To the Directors of the U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association:

We have reviewed the statement of financial position of the U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association as at March 31, 2006 and the statement of operations and net assets for the year then ended. Our review was made in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements and accordingly consisted primarily of enquiry, analytical procedures and discussion related to information supplied to us by the Association.

A review does not constitute an audit and consequently we do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that these financial statements are not, in all material respects, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Abbotsford, British Columbia

August 17, 2006



Chartered Accountants





**U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
*As at March 31, 2006*  
*(Unaudited)*

	2006	2005
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash	28,536	22,895
Term deposits (note 2)	119,458	127,344
Accounts receivable	49,641	50,307
Prepaid expenses and deposits	300	-
	197,935	200,546
<b>Investments (note 3)</b>	226,352	153,366
<b>Office equipment and furniture (note 4)</b>	24,821	17,742
	449,108	371,654
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accruals	100,285	10,149
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Invested in office equipment and furniture	24,821	17,742
Unrestricted	324,002	343,763
	348,823	361,505
	449,108	371,654

Approved by the Board

Director

Director

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

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**MNP**

**U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association**  
**Statement of Operations and Net Assets**  
*For the year ended March 31, 2006*  
*(Unaudited)*

	2006	2005
<b>Revenue</b>		
Dues and fees	495,922	537,700
AGM and social revenues	4,493	5,370
Investment income	14,252	6,319
	514,667	549,389
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Annual general meeting and social expenses	11,063	8,981
Amortization	4,729	3,367
Committee expenses	25	250
Communications	3,845	3,602
Delegate and seminar fees	1,044	2,623
Donations	3,952	3,970
Federation of Post Secondary Educators fees	240,800	226,865
Joint funding	4,000	4,066
Membership recognition	4,684	3,576
Office and miscellaneous supplies	7,489	7,105
Professional fees	6,737	6,115
Release time	158,061	129,405
Retreat	8,472	5,878
Salaries, wages and benefits	71,451	71,416
Travel and entertainment	1,841	3,454
	528,192	480,673
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year, before undernoted item</b>	(13,524)	68,716
<b>Gain on disposal of office equipment and furniture</b>	843	313
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures</b>	(12,682)	69,029
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</b>	361,505	292,476
<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	348,823	361,505

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

3

**MNP**



# U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended March 31, 2006

(Unaudited)

The Association is incorporated in the Province of British Columbia. Its primary purpose is to collect and manage various dues and fees relating to its members.

### 1. Summary of significant accounting policies

#### (a) Term deposits

Term deposits are recorded at cost.

#### (b) Investments

Long-term investments are recorded at cost.

#### (c) Office furniture and equipment

Office furniture and equipment is recorded at cost. It is the policy of the Association to provide for the amortization of these assets over their estimated useful lives at 20% using the declining balance method.

#### (d) Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. These estimates are reviewed periodically.

#### (e) Revenue recognition

U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association follows the deferral method of accounting for revenue. Restricted revenue is recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted revenue is recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

#### (f) Income taxes

The Association is exempt from income taxes under the Income Tax Act ("the Act").

### 2. Term deposits

	2006	2005
Maturing October 1, 2006, earning interest at 1.30%	17,906	17,710
Maturing September 6, 2006, earning interest at 2.33%	101,552	-
Matured November 2005	-	51,025
Matured October 2005	-	58,609
	\$ 119,458	\$ 127,344



**U.C.F.V. Faculty and Staff Association****Notes to the Financial Statements***For the year ended March 31, 2006**(Unaudited)***3. Investments**

	2006	2005
Nesbitt Burns, fixed income accounts, various rates and maturity dates (market value 2006- \$246,929; 2005 - \$162,716)	226,352	153,366

**4. Office equipment and furniture**

			2006	2005
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net Book Value	Net Book Value
Office equipment and furniture	59,497	34,676	24,821	17,742

**5. Cash flow statement**

A cash flow statement has not been presented with these financial statements as the required information is readily apparent from the financial statements or is adequately disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.





October 25, 2006



**TO: THE CLC LITERACY WORKING GROUP**

**SUBJECT: FEDERAL CUTS TO LITERACY**

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***GREETINGS!***

**The Canadian Labour Congress stands in solidarity with the literacy community.**

Last week, I made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on the impact of the Conservative government cuts to social and human rights programs on behalf of the three million workers represented by the Canadian Labour Congress. There is no question that \$17.7 million in cuts to literacy are mean-spirited and short-sighted. An insult to the herculean work of the literacy community and their partners, the cuts to literacy were apparently made because the program lacked "value for money", although no evidence is cited.

We stand in solidarity with the literacy community across Canada in their outrage against the recent federal cuts. We are concerned about the havoc wreaked by the wide-sweeping cuts, which amount to an attempt to silence the voices of Canadians. The cuts are particularly devastating to those who are not yet able to exercise their full citizenship because of the barriers in their way: women, immigrants, people of colour, Aborigines, people with disabilities, youth, and those who lack the literacy skills they need to fully participate.

The major impact of the literacy cuts will be on Canadians with low literacy skills who are among the most disenfranchised and who have the least resources. The federal literacy dollars went a long way, providing the supports needed for co-ordination, instructor training, and the development of learning resources that enrich and sustain the learning. Often, these dollars were matched by provincial funds to support community literacy organizations operating on a shoe-string budget.

**The cuts fly in the face of the statistics.**

The cuts also fly in the face of the statistics: 42% of adult Canadians lack the literacy skills to meet the demands of today's society. The disappointing numbers are no surprise: literacy has suffered from a chronic lack of funding and Canada is sorely lacking a national strategy for literacy and adult learning. The cuts will further exacerbate an already disjointed and impoverished state of affairs. The plan to develop a Pan-Canadian comprehensive strategy for literacy recommended by an all-party standing committee in 2003 and endorsed by Parliament has all but faded into oblivion.





**Resources and co-ordination needed from the ground up.**

We need a co-ordinated approach with more funding for literacy, not this step backwards. The Labour Market Partnership Agreements signed last year with Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan could have been a step in the right direction, but this government has chosen not to honour them. The Minister of Human Resources and Social Development rationalized cutting provincial, territorial and regional literacy coalitions and networks by saying "this government is refocusing its money on programs of a national nature to help literacy at all levels." But national organizations are only as strong as their base. You can't support the roof unless the walls and foundation are there.

We don't know yet whether the cuts will affect the workplace education partnerships in place in several provinces, where employers, labour, and provincial governments work together to promote and deliver workplace literacy programs. Our provincial and territorial federations of labour have been active partners in these successful arrangements, and may be poised to lose their funding. Rather than cut the funding, these partnerships need to be celebrated and strengthened. This model of excellence should be adopted by other jurisdictions.

The answer to dealing with workplace skills shortages is staring us in the face: there is a large pool of adults ready and willing to learn if we give them the chance to build a foundation for further learning. But the President of the Treasury Board was reported to say he doesn't want to waste money on the 'repair work' of adult literacy, he only wants to support children's literacy. It isn't an either/or: we all know that children's literacy blossoms when the adults in their lives read and engage with them around literacy-based activities. Parents often choose to improve their literacy skills so they can read to their children, help them with their homework, and set an example for lifelong learning.

**Labour is a partner in literacy**

Labour's approach to literacy has always been about building the skills workers need for participation, access and inclusion for the betterment of individuals, workplaces, communities and Canadian society. Our approach is also about equality, and taking steps to diminish the growing disparities in our communities. We are committed to working in partnership with employers, communities, all levels of government and literacy organizations to create learning opportunities for workers and their families in the workplace and in the community. We know that the pay-off is huge: that an increase in adult literacy will have a positive impact on the economy, on health, and on social cohesion. It could be a win-win formula, if only the political will were there.

In Solidarity,



Barbara Byers  
CLC Executive Vice-President

c.c. CLC Executive Council and Ranking Officers  
CLC Training and Technology Committee  
CLC Education Committee

CLC Women's Committee  
CLC Human Rights Committee and Working Groups  
CLC staff



## RUSSET LAKE-AFGHANISTAN: AUGUST 20 & SEPTEMBER 5, 2006

Gary Bauman, Bryan Ward and I left Abbotsford at 6:00 on Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup>, and we wound our way up the Sea to Sky and arrived at Whistler by 8:30. The lift did not open until 9:30, so we waited, swapped tales and anticipated the hike under the blue canopy and the heat of day star. We were, by 10:30, off the peak chair and on the wide dirt roadway. We dipped down into the valley, and it took us little time to bid adieu to the heights of Whistler and be on the trail. The older path took us up and over Musical Bumps (Piccolo, Flute & Oboe), then down into Singing Pass. Many a pleasant ski run has been done in the powder of Flute bowl.

The hike up again from Singing Pass into Russet Lake (and the Alpine cabin) was a delight. We were charmed and lured by the sheer beauty of the white tipped Spearhead and Fitzsimmons Ranges. The well clad snowfield and blue lipped glacier of Castle Towers held our attention for many a moment. We had a splendid lunch by the gurgling stream that curled its way out of Russet Lake. The well built rock shelters protected a few tents, and the Alpine hut was empty. We left the lake by about 2:30 and hastened back over the Musical Bumps to the Roundhouse Lodge for the final gondola descent at 5:30. We headed into the Fraser Valley as an alpenglow lit up Baker in a bright orange last gasp of the day.

My son has just returned from a 7 month tour in Afghanistan. He has spent much of the time in Forward Operational Bases (FOBs) in the barren mountains outside Kandahar near Pashmul, Panjwai and Gumbad near the dense rock mass of Badwan Outcrop. Many a time he carried an 80 pound pack up steep and treacherous slopes. Needless to say, it is good to have him back safe with us again. We have had many a restless and sleepless night.

My wife (Karin) and I, and our son (Nathan) and his wife (Rita) headed up to the Musical Bumps and Russet Lake area Tuesday September 5<sup>th</sup>. The terrain was lush than the raw and forbidding peaks of

Afghanistan. There were no Taliban, also, to ambush him as had been done many times in the last few months. He now has etched deep in his memory the deaths and permanent injuries of many dear friends. Our conversation, naturally, turned to the war in Afghanistan (and his experience there) as we followed the contours of the trail. Different perspectives were pondered and left behind just as the each of the Musical Bumps rose and fell, fell and rose. Should Canada be in Afghanistan, who is the real terrorist, why is Canada in Afghanistan, are we ever likely to win and what is it like to live daily with bombs and bullets going off in all directions? We crested a lower rock peak, looked up to the snow and ice fields above us, and down to the valley. Much can be seen from the heights that is often missed in the hurly burly and skirmishes in the lowlands. We pondered those who made decisions from the heights but know little of those who fought as infantry in the dust thick desert and mountain caves.

The afternoon waxed and waned, the music of Oboe, Piccolo and Flute was silent. Russet offered an early autumn beauty the surreal experience in Afghanistan lacked— such a stark contrast in mountains and political reality.

What would the mountains say if they could speak?

We had a late afternoon drink outside on the spacious balcony of Roundhouse Lodge. Nathan was wearing a shirt that made it obvious he had been in Afghanistan. A naïve but well meaning Canadian patriot came up and thanked Nathan for the work the Canadian troops are doing in Afghanistan, then he left. Nathan turned to me, and said, 'if only he knew the real story'. I put my arm around the broad, tanned and steel like shoulder of our son, we looked toward Russet and headed down the mountain again.

-Ron Dart

### UCFV FACULTY ANCESTORS FOUND IN LAS VEGAS ARCHIVES

**Ancestors of UCFV Trades and Technology faculty have recently been located through the archives of the Las Vegas City Hall.**

According to the article, Deen "Momma I'm Goin' Fast" Key (left in photo) was the wheel man in many a heist and booze run. He was killed in 1929 when his speedster left the highway while being chased by the FBI or a jealous husband. He left behind a group of trained drivers to carry on the Key legacy as well as an undetermined number of children.



Burney "Moneybags" Duncan (center) was the numbers man for a number of crime groups. Burney distributed money to all other members of the gang but was killed when someone who didn't get his fair share dropped a safe on him from a fourth floor window. It is rumoured that the safe contained Burney's share.

Rendell "Machine Gun" Kelly (right) was the enforcer for gangs led by Bugsy Malone and some other guy who talked like he had a mouthful of marbles. He was not killed in a hail of bullets as expected but went on to invent something called the Internet. Since everyone knew his idea would never amount to anything, he decided to work in the aviation industry flying really homely airplanes. He passed away peacefully at the ripe old age of fifty.

(From left to right Dean Key, Automotive Instructor; Bernie Duncan, Automotive Apprenticeship Instructor; and Randy Kelly, Electronics Instructor.)



## FSA NOTES & NOTICES

*Come out and enjoy the  
UCFV/FSA  
Christmas Dinner/Dance 2006  
on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>  
at the*

*Abbotsford Arts Centre  
2329 Crescent Way, Abbotsford*



**Cocktails at 5:00 p.m.**

**Dinner at 6:00 p.m.**

**Dancing at 7:00 p.m.**

Free coffee and pop will be served to designated drivers and non-drinkers throughout the night.

Tickets for the event are \$25 per person and are available at the Abbotsford and Chilliwack Faculty Reception areas and at the Mission Business Office. Cheques should be made payable to the UCFV/FSA and dated December 15, 2006.

Bring a donation for the local food bank and have your name entered for a door prize!



## THE FSA EXECUTIVE FOR 2006/2007

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### ***Words & Vision:***

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